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Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Written statement* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 August 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims

Xenophobia and discrimination against minorities is widely condemned in international human rights declarations, conventions, treaties, and all meetings. However, Muslims are still facing a variety of discrimination all over the world, including verbal harassment, hate speech, violent attacks and religious profiling.

One of the root causes of the unfair treatment of Muslims is the bitter reality that some religious extremist groups are committing violent crimes in the name of Islam. For example, ISIS, ill-famed by the atrocities presented, is being known in the media mainstream as a Muslim Extremist group. These extremists however, present a wrong picture of Islam through their negative practices that have nothing to do with noble Islamic values and teaching. [1] They tend to interpret the religious scripture in a selective manner so as to justify their illogical, inhuman decisions.

As a consequence, Muslims turn to be the biggest victims of religious extremism in the world. Because, actions of extremists and violence seekers, create waves of Islamophobia across the world, which results in presenting a dark and unreal image of Islam along with a tendency to reject, marginalize Muslims and discriminate against them.

When the crimes committed by religious extremist groups get full media coverage, they trigger a phobia toward Muslims. As a result, numerous cases of harassment and threat toward Muslims, their religious sites or buildings are reported. Such as the attacks to Muslim mosques across Europe.

This is while many Muslims face much more serious problems as they get dead or injured because of involvement in conflicts created by extremists. According to the United Nations, over 220,000 Syrians have been killed, and almost half of the country's men, women and children have been forced to flee their homes since the conflict in Syria erupted in March 2011. The spread and intensification of the fight have led to a dire humanitarian crisis with millions internally displaced or seeking refuge in neighbouring countries and many of these people have been Muslims.[2]

ODVV strongly believes that the fight against Xenophobia should unite the world as this phenomenon, including practices of racial and religious profiling, is present to all societies. Accordingly ODVV calls upon the states and the Human Rights Council to:

- Arrange panel discussions, in the council to study and discuss various aspects of Islamophobia, consider the best practices done by the States and NGOs to deal with the issue and offer recommendations on how to approach the problem.

- Encourage the media to do its best in illustrating a real picture of minority groups such as Muslims so as not to create atmosphere.

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[1] http://islam.ru/en/content/story/oic-chief-global-action-fight-islamophobia-needed
[2] https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/syria